

From

DR. JOSEPH LEIDY, JR.
237 SOUTH 13TH ST.
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FRACTURE OF THE BODY OF THE SCAPULA, THROUGH MUSCULAR VIOLENCE.¹

AN interesting case of fracture of the body of the scapula, through muscular violence, was admitted to the receiving ward of the Pennsylvania Hospital, with the following history :

C. F., æt. 33, fell from the deck of a coasting vessel to the bottom of the hold, a distance of between twenty and twenty-five feet. In his descent he grasped a rope hanging near by with sufficient strength to steady himself, but almost instantly experienced a sharp, stinging pain in the shoulder, which compelled him to relinquish his grasp, when he fell to the bottom, striking upon his buttocks. On admission to the hospital he complained of some pain in his thighs, and desired to return home. While examining the back, pressure over the right scapula caused him to flinch. On making a more thorough examination of this region, by grasping the spine of the scapula above and the inferior angle below, and gently moving the bone in opposite directions, crepitus was felt and could be heard by those standing near his bed. There was no evidence of contusion, and he assures me he did not strike his shoulder at any time during the fall. There was a little deformity, caused by the lower fragment having been drawn upward and inward and overlapping somewhat the upper fragment. There was no swelling, though manipulation caused some pain.

The treatment consisted in placing his arm to the side, holding it in position by adhesive plaster, and retaining a compress over the body of the scapula by means of a firm roller; the forearm was placed across the chest, and the third roller of Desault was applied.

The first dressing was removed two weeks after the injury occurred. The fragments had united firmly and in good position.

Fractures of the scapula are placed among the rare accidents in surgery. Of over 4,600 fractures treated in this hospital, from May 1, 1884, to the present time, December 1, 1890, but seventeen were fractures of the scapula, or less than .37 per cent. Of these seventeen, the records show but two (2) fractures of the body of the scapula, less than .05 per cent.; both were due to direct violence.

The above case is of especial interest, as having been caused through muscular action; the body of the bone being the seat of fracture, the diagnosis

¹ Read before the Philadelphia County Medical Society.

FRACTURE THROUGH MUSCULAR VIOLENCE.

was clear. The literature of the subject presents but four cases of this fracture due to muscular action.

Callaway is quoted by Packard¹ as reporting a case observed by Dr. Heylen. A man, æt. 49, hung to a cart and was drawn along some 100 yards. The diagnosis was clear.

Morris² reports a case of an engineer, who fell forward against a lever and felt something snap. Upon examination, a fracture through the spine was diagnosed.

Dobson³ reports the case of a young artilleryman, who, in attempting to move a heavy iron target, felt a snap in his shoulder, which, upon examination, proved to be a fracture through the body of the bone. Crepitus was detected in this case by the stethoscope.

Gurlt⁴ quotes from Michon a case in which a child, getting up off the ground, fractured the scapula through muscular action.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to Dr. Morton for permission to place this case upon record.

JOSEPH LEIDY, JR., M.D.,
Resident Surgeon, Pennsylvania Hospital.

¹ International Encyclopædia of Surgery, Vol. IV., p. 114.

² Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 114.

³ Lancet, Nov. 27, 1886, p. 114.

⁴ Cyclopædia of Diseases of Children, Vol. III, p. 1062.